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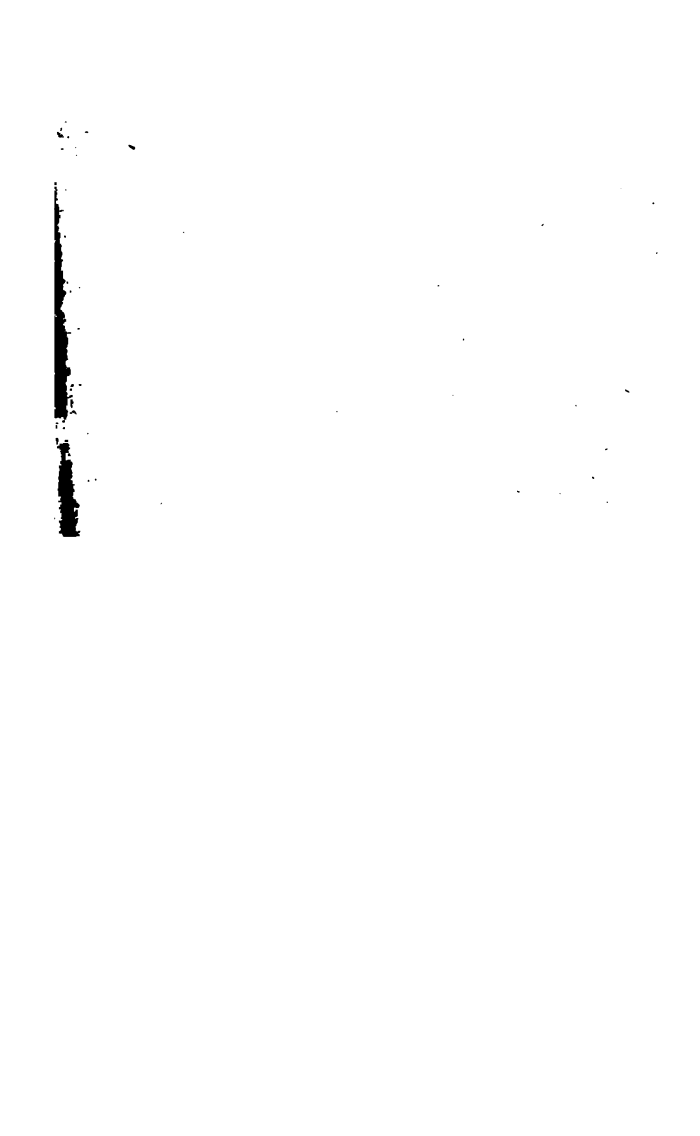
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48,855.





AN

ADDRESS AFTER CONFIRMATION.

DATE.

"This day shall be unto me for a memorial."

Exodus xii. 13.

On this Day,

I -----
did, in the presence of God and of His Congregation,
assembled in the Parish Church of -----
"renew the solemn promise and vow made in my name
at my Baptism; and, in answer to Prayer, and by
"the Laying on of Hands," was Confirmed by my
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD, -----
LORD BISHOP of -----

AN ADDRESS
AFTER
CONFIRMATION.

BY
THE REV. JOHN DOWNALL, M.A.,
(LATE INCUMBENT OF ST. GEORGE'S, KIDDERMINSTER.)
CURATE OF OKEHAMPTON, DEVON; AND CHAPLAIN TO THE
RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BURLINGTON.

"And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We *are* witnesses."—*Joshua* xxiv. 22.

Third Edition.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER & CO., AVE MARIA LANE.
EXETER: H. J. WALLIS.
PLYMOUTH: ROGER LIDSTONE.

1848.

EXETER:
H. J. WALLIS, PRINTER,
HIGH STREET.



AN ADDRESS, &c.

DEARLY beloved in the Lord, I now address you with a heart full of deep and earnest anxiety for your eternal salvation. I have instructed you in the duties required of you; I have shewn you the nature and conditions of the Gospel Covenant; I have taken you before the assembled congregation and the appointed minister of God; I have offered up my own, and seen others offering up their prayers, that you may be “defended with God’s heavenly grace, and continue His for ever, and daily increase in His Holy Spirit *more and more, until you come to His*

everlasting kingdom !”* And now “my heart’s desire, and prayer to God for you” is, that you may continue steadfast in the Covenant of grace and mercy, and live in the faith and fear of God ; that when we shall at length stand together, not in a temple made with hands, nor before a multitude encompassed with infirmities like ourselves, nor before a “ high priest taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God ;” but in the temple of universal space, when heaven and earth shall have passed away—when the thrones shall be set, and the judgment be commencing—when there shall be assembled angel and archangel, cherubim and seraphim, and multitudes which no man can number, of prophets and apostles, of saints and martyrs, and the spirits of just men made

* The Bishop’s prayer when he “ lays his hand upon the head of every one severally.”—*The Order of Confirmation.*

perfect — when we shall behold Jesus, who is *now* our Redeemer and our Advocate with the Father, coming *then* in power and great glory to be our Judge; “in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of His Son;”—my desire and earnest prayer is, that *then* we shall stand together approved in His sight—servants who, knowing their Lord’s will, have, by His grace, continually endeavoured to perform it; and be welcomed by Him as having “well done” those vows and resolutions which we have made, and be partakers everlastingly of the unspeakable joy of our Lord!!!

But, before we can attain to the glory and inheritance which He hath purchased for us with His blood — before we can be admitted to “sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”—before we can become “kings and priests” in His holy temple, — we must pass our sojournings

here in the faith and fear of His holy name. His word must be our guide ; His life and conduct must be our example : our thoughts must be so regulated—our actions so performed—our means of grace so improved, as becometh those who have entered into a covenant with the Most High, and are “witnesses against themselves, that they have chosen the Lord to serve Him.”

To instruct you how you shall best be enabled to fulfil the conditions of the covenant into which you have entered and have solemnly taken upon yourselves, shall be my endeavour at this time.

The first rule I propose for your guidance is, that you be *diligent in the reading of God's holy word*. That word contains the will of our heavenly Father towards us ; it lays down the great principles of our duty towards him ; it points out the evil and the enemy which we are to avoid ; *it shews us how we are reconciled to God*

through Jesus Christ the Saviour; it informs us how we are to be purified from the corruptions of our sinful nature by the power of the Holy Ghost; it tells us of the joys of heaven, and the never ending punishments of hell; and it contains innumerable instructions and encouragements to carry forward our attention and our affections to that future world of glory and immortality which is offered to every one of us in and through the Saviour. All that you now know of God and of His mercy, has been through the Scriptures; all that you need know for the attainment of that mercy, is contained in the Scriptures; for they are declared by those who knew their value, had experienced their efficacy, and wrote a portion of them, "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," for our profit and instruction, to be the "incorruptible seed of which we are born again,"* to be "able to make us wise unto

* 1 Peter, i. 23.

salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus ;" that they were " given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* Jesus Christ himself the great Being whose wonderful love and mercy towards us is our only hope and passport into heaven — Jesus Christ himself hath commanded us to " search the Scriptures, for in them we have eternal life ; and they are they that testify of Him."† Therefore I beseech you for Jesus Christ's sake — I beseech you for the sake of your eternal happiness—for the sake of your immortal souls I beseech you " search the Scriptures." Let no day pass over your heads without your reading some portion of God's holy word : meditate upon it continually, and pray over it most earnestly ; *that you may* be enabled clearly to per-

* 2 Timothy, iii. 16, 17. † John v. 39.

ceive, rightly to understand, and effectually to secure those things which belong unto your eternal peace. It would be an easy matter for every one of you to take up your Bible every evening before you go to your nightly rest, and to ponder for a few minutes some of the great and important truths which it contains. It would be a task well-pleasing in the sight of God, and would not fail to bring down a blessing upon your own and the souls of others, if you would prevail upon your brothers and sisters, your fathers and mothers, your fellow servants and daily companions, to hear some portion of God's message of mercy to fallen man—of the Saviour's love to sinners—of the promised forgiveness—of the assistance offered—of the glory which is yet to be revealed—of the "rest" which "remaineth for the people of God. Heaven is the home which is provided for you, and you are travelling to that home through *the wilderness of sin. The Bible has been*

given to be a guide to your path, and a light to your steps : use it, therefore, for the purposes intended ; and that you may advance every day upon your journey towards heaven, be diligent every day to consult that map and directory which can alone lead you in security and peace to the country to which you are travelling.

The next rule to which I call your attention is, *the practice of daily prayer*. Prayer is that great and important Christian duty to which God hath promised His blessing. In His word He hath declared Himself to be a God who heareth and will answer prayer. Without prayer you can never hope for the protection, the assistance, the blessing of God. By prayer only can you prevail over your spiritual enemies ; by prayer only can you be preserved from evil, or enabled to strive after that which is good. Only in answer *to prayer* will that grace and strength be *given you from above*, without which all

our own exertions are nothing worth. Pray to God, then, day by day ;— every morning when the light cometh forth from His chambers, and every evening, when darkness covers all things, let your prayers and praises ascend before the throne of that God who maketh the darkness and light. Praise Him for past mercies, and pray to Him for future blessings. Never once go forth to your work and your labour without imploring His protection : never once close your eyes in sleep without supplicating His forgiveness. And not only in the morning and at night, but *during the whole day*, preserve in your mind a continued disposition for prayer. The life of a sincere Christian is one great continuous prayer. At all times and in all places you are exposed to evil from within and without ; at all times and on all occasions you stand in need of grace from above : therefore you must labour to cultivate a constant disposition for

prayer. When evil assails you from within, let your heart rise instantly in prayer to God to give you grace to rebuke it; when temptation cometh upon you from without, fly instantly to God for strength to resist it: and by prayer shall ye prevail. "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find." God will "give His Holy, Spirit to all them that ask Him." "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord to serve Him:" you know that you cannot serve Him in your own strength, and can do so only by *His* grace. His grace you know is promised and will be given you, if you seek it in sincerity. For our Redeemer's sake our weakness shall become strength. We shall, through Him, be clothed upon with heavenly armour, and furnished with weapons to beat down our spiritual foes, and with power to hold on in our spiritual journey. For the sake of that "*High Priest of our profession*," "that is passed

into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," we are encouraged to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Let me hope, then, that you will daily pray to God, and daily praise Him—that you will pray to him in every moment of temptation and of danger, and that you will praise Him for every triumph He gives you strength to secure over your spiritual foes, and for every advance which He enables you to make towards the attainment of your "high and heavenly calling."

I wish you in the next place to cultivate the *habit of daily self-examination*. It is necessary that you should be continually enquiring into your state before God ; that you should be ascertaining carefully, whether, and how far, you are conforming yourselves to His will. Every day which you live is an additional proof of God's mercy towards you. He gives you one

day more in order that you may be one day better ; that you may advance nearer towards heaven as you advance nearer to the grave. It is your duty, therefore, to ask yourselves each night some such questions as these :—

What have I done during the past day towards fulfilling the promises I have made to serve the Lord ?

Am I better as well as older ?

Have I resisted sin and turned away mine eyes from beholding vanity ?

Have I endeavoured this day to improve those opportunities of amendment which have been graciously afforded me ?

Have I avoided those sins which I yesterday committed ? and have I so conducted myself, in thought, word, and deed, as becometh a disciple of Jesus Christ ?

Have I laboured to secure a well-grounded hope, that, if my soul shall “*this night be required of me,*” I may “*sleep in*

Jesus," with the assurance of immortal happiness and glory through Him ?

Such a habit of daily self-examination will lead us to perceive whether or not we are really growing in grace and holiness ; whether we are advancing in our spiritual course. It will bring before us those things which we have done amiss, or neglected to do which were right ; it will supply us with subjects of prayer to our heavenly Father ; it will quicken our activity and diligence to strive, by His grace, to do what is well pleasing. We shall then be enabled, *every day*, to mark our faults, our follies, our deficiencies, and to bring them all to the foot of the cross, to seek for their pardon and forgiveness ; that so we may be enabled to make our peace with God before we close our eyes in sleep. We shall then be enabled, day by day, to go on correcting that which is evil, improving that which is corrected, and carrying on to greater degrees of per-

fection, that which is improved. I recommend this practice to all, more especially to those of you who have just become “witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord to serve Him.”

Another rule which I am desirous to recommend to you is, to *set the Lord always before you* ; to impress your hearts with the great and awful truth, that *the eye of God is watching you continually*. In the darkness of night, “when deep sleep falleth upon man”—in the bright and shining day, when you are engaged in business or pleasure—when you are surrounded by the society and activity of men, or buried in the still silence of solitude,—God is not far from every one of you. “He is about your path, and about your bed, and spieth out all your ways ; there is not a thought in your hearts but He knoweth it altogether.” “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest *in His sight* ; but all things are naked and

open to Him with whom we have to do." Cultivate, then, a deep sense of His awful and abiding presence with you. By day and by night, in your morning walk and your evening meditation, in the midst of your companions, and in your solitary moments, think of the Lord continually. Let the feeling and the language of your hearts be, "Thou, O God, seest me!" By a habit such as this, you will acquire a dread of sin; a fear of offending God; and you will, by His grace, be striving continually to do those things which are well pleasing in His sight, and be enabled in the end to attain everlasting life.

In addition to these, the next great means by which you shall be enabled to serve the Lord is, *a participation of the Lord's Supper*. On Sunday next there will be administered, "the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ." You are now able to understand the nature, and in age are old

enough to become partakers of that holy ordinance. This Sacrament was appointed by Jesus Christ our Lord, for conveying to His faithful disciples in every age the "benefits which by His precious blood-shedding He obtained for them." It is necessary, therefore, that they *all* should be partakers of it; for He would not have ordained what was not essential: nor can any thing be considered *unnecessary* which He hath appointed. All those, then, who have entered into covenant with Him, all those who are His servants indeed, must "be partakers of *His* body and blood," "who in the same night that He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of me. Likewise after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying, *Drink ye all of this*; for this is my blood

of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

I have now set before you a few plain rules to guide and assist you in fulfilling the duties of the heavenly covenant.—*By a careful and constant perusal of the Scriptures; by daily and fervent prayer, in the morning and evening, and at every moment of danger, temptation, and of sin; by a strict and daily habit of self-examination; and by setting God always before you;—*you will be preparing yourselves aright for the *habitual* participation of that great Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; wherein the faithful disciples of Jesus feed upon "the body and blood of Christ," and receive, under all the trials and afflictions of this present life, "the strengthening and refreshing of their souls;" and are encouraged to expect greater gifts of grace and larger measure

of consolation. Partakers of this holy ordinance, you will then be preparing yourselves more and more for appearing in *His* presence to whose service you have devoted yourselves, who has promised to watch over and protect you in the present world, to “guide you by His counsel here, and afterwards to receive you to glory.” I beseech you, then, as one most anxious for the eternal salvation of your souls, give good heed to these things ; “by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,” approving yourselves in all things the servants of God. You have renounced the devil and all his works, the idle pomps and deceitful pleasures of the world, and all the impure lusts of the flesh ; and ye “are witnesses against yourselves,” the congregation of your fellow men are witnesses

against you; yea, the angels and the company of heaven are witnesses against you that "you have chosen the Lord to serve him." If ye be sincere in your engagements, then your hearts have become nothing less than "temples of the living God;" as God hath said "I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

To those who are the parents, the sponsors, the friends, or masters of these young people, who have made a dedication of themselves to God, I would add a word of exhortation. Be you diligent, I entreat you, in reminding them continually of these things. You are aware to how great and important a work they have

devoted themselves! how unspeakable will be their reward if they continue steadfast to the end in this covenant! how tremendous will be their eternal punishment if they neglect it! Be you, then, diligent in encouraging and exhorting them to "fear the Lord and to serve him." Set them an example yourselves of those rules I have been recommending to them; study *with* them the pages of God's holy word; strengthen their faith; remove their doubts and misgivings; confirm their hope, and animate their exertions by frequent conversations on those things which have been done for them, and shall yet be revealed to them; for "thus saith the Lord, These words which I command thee shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and *when thou risest up.*" Join them in daily

prayer to the Father of their spirits and your spirits; assist them in their daily self-examination; and be careful, for your own sakes and for theirs, that, neither by word nor deed, ye do any thing to disgrace “that holy name by which ye are called,” to render yourselves unworthy of those hopes to which we are “begotten again through the Gospel.” Set the Lord always before you, because He is at your right hand. Give all diligence to secure His favour, to bring down His blessing upon yourselves, and the families He hath given you, and to make your own “calling and election sure.”

Finally, my dear young friends, I admonish you in the words, and with some portion of the earnestness which David evidenced in his final charge to the youthful king of Israel,—“And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord search

eth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever."

PRAAYER

TO BE USED AFTER, MORE ESPECIALLY ON THE ANNI-
VERSARY OF YOUR CONFIRMATION.

O LORD, who hast ordained divers rites and ceremonies in Thy Church, and vouchsafed "gifts" thereby, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ;" look upon me in mercy, who, in the rite of Confirmation, have sought for the strengthening influences of Thy Holy Spirit, and have avouched myself to be Thy servant. Strengthen every holy purpose and resolution of my heart to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called;" in all things approving myself the servant of God; "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by the word of truth, by the power of God;" that so I may not dishonour

Thy holy name, nor have “received the grace of God in vain.”

And now, O blessed Saviour, as I desire and am about to seek communion with Thy saints in the Holy Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood, vouchsafe me therein greater measures of Thy Holy Spirit, His grace, and strength, and consolations. Thou hast said, “Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.” “Behold the servant (the handmaid) of the Lord; be it unto *me* according to Thy word.”

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

In 18mo., price 8d.,

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OR

Plain Letters on Confirmation.







